

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE

Reintroduction of Native Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Greenhorn Creek by removal of
Nonnative Hybrid Rainbow x Cutthroat and Brook Trout with Rotenone

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 3, Bozeman
July 22, 2013

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has proposed this project to facilitate conservation of native westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) in Southwest Montana. Genetically “pure” WCT are estimated to only persist in 4% of their historic range in the upper Missouri River drainage, and most remaining populations are considered “*at-risk*.” The proposed project, located in Greenhorn Creek (near Alder), includes the use of a piscicide (rotenone) to remove non-native trout that threaten WCT and transfer of WCT into stream reaches where nonnative trout have been removed. This project is designed to reduce threats to WCT populations considered *at-risk*, to increase the overall distribution of WCT, and to conserve the genetic legacy of existing WCT populations.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared by FWP for the proposed project and released on June 21, 2013 for a 30-day public comment period. The draft EA was titled: Reintroduction of Native Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Greenhorn Creek by removal of Nonnative Hybrid Rainbow x Cutthroat and Brook Trout with Rotenone. The draft EA was circulated to a standard FWP Region 3 contact list and was also posted and remains available for viewing on the FWP webpage: <http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicNotices>. Legal notice indicating release of the EA was sent to the *Madisonian*.

Summary of Public Comment and FWP response

Two written public comments were received during the 30-day EA review period ending July 21, 2013. Both comments were classified as supportive of the proposal.

Final Environmental Assessment for the EA titled: Reintroduction of Native Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Greenhorn Creek by removal of Nonnative Hybrid Rainbow x Cutthroat and Brook Trout with Rotenone.

There are no modifications necessary to the Draft Environmental Assessments based on public comment. The Draft Environmental Assessment, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final document for this proposal.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and the need to conserve WCT in the Missouri River drainage of SW Montana, FWP's decision is to proceed with the proposed WCT conservation project in the Greenhorn Creek drainage.

I find there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. J. Flowers', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Patrick J. Flowers
Region Three Supervisor